

MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Roundtable Discussion on Legislative Topics for 2007
September 12, 2006
(approved as revised on 10/2/2006)

Chair Jeffrey Cammack called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to order at 1:03pm in Florian Hall, Maine Department of Public Safety Building, 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta. Members present included Stephan Bunker, Chief Jeffrey Cammack, Chief John Dean, Chief Kenneth Desmond, Chief Darrel Fournier, Robert Gardner (for Charles Jacobs), Gerry Gay, Ron Green, Geoffrey Maker, Alex McPhedran, Senator Richard Nass, David Niklaus, Harty Norris, Vicki Schmidt, Charles Soltan, David Wacker, Leslie Wiles and Susan Pinette (staff). Members excused included Representative Patricia Blanchette, Jay Bradshaw, Representative Richard Brown, Senator Bruce Bryant, Representative Robert Duplessie and Edward Johnston. Participating in today's discussion were the following guests of the Fire Commission: Chief Fred LaMontagne of the Portland Fire Department; Chief Roy Woods of the Caribou Fire Department; Chief William St. Michel of the Durham Fire Department; John Martel and David Estes of the Bangor Fire Department (PFFM); Steve Willis, Don Curtis, Walter Morris, Bruce Hensler and Ed Marks from Maine Fire Training and Education (MFT&E); Joseph Thomas from the State Fire Marshal's Office; and Albert Godfrey of Rockwood Fire and Rescue.

Chair Cammack welcomed the participants and briefly outlined the purpose for the meeting. The Fire Commission has initially identified six topics to head their legislative agenda in 2007. They include recruitment and retention, training facilities, residential sprinklers, truss construction, regional communication centers and funding for MFT&E. The Fire Commission plans to work with other Maine fire service leaders and emergency first responders, community and business leaders, legislators and the public to introduce and pass legislation on these initial six topics in 2007. Various documents were distributed regarding the agenda items. They included:

1. Summary of Fire Commission minutes
2. Penflex report on recruitment and retention
3. Task force report on training facilities
4. Scottsdale report on residential sprinklers
5. Residential sprinkler fact sheet
6. LD 1879- truss construction bill (2006)
7. LD 1969- PSAPs/dispatch centers bill (2006)
8. Maine Chiefs' discussion paper on regional communication centers

Maine Fire Training and Education Funding

Prior to the Fire Commission meeting, the Maine Fire Training and Education Advisory Committee met at Florian Hall. David Niklaus, MFT&E's representative on the Fire Commission, summarized the advisory committee's meeting and distributed a chart titled: MFT&E's Summary Revenue vs. Expenditures 2002-2006, 2007 est. Fire Commission members had many questions regarding expenditure increases in 2006, FIPTax, Maine's General Fund, MFT&E funding sources and the difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified instructors.

Recruitment and Retention

The Fire Commission has been working on the issue of recruitment and retention since its formation in 2000. Recognizing the importance of volunteers to Maine's fire service, the Fire Commission hired Penflex, Inc. of New York to conduct an actuarial study and review for a length of service award program. The study was completed in April 2003. Although the Fire Commission has discussed the issue in the past three years, members want to make a strong effort in 2007. Members agreed to form a committee of 7-9 interested individuals (Fire Commission and others). Acknowledging money will always be a major issue for the Legislature, members agreed to stand together as a fire service and move forward. The Recruitment and Retention Committee's charge will be to determine the benefits and funding source or sources of the proposed legislation. The committee will report its findings to the entire Fire Commission.

Training Facilities

The final revised copy of the Task Force Report on Training Facilities was distributed. The Fire Commission's Training Facility Committee submitted their report in 2004. In February 2006, the Fire Commission requested that a group of Maine Fire Chiefs convene to discuss training facilities in Maine and submit their recommendations. The Maine Fire Chiefs recommended "the establishment of the Maine Emergency Services Institute (MESI)." (page 15, Task Force Report on Training Facilities) At the July 2006 meeting the Fire Commission unanimously voted to "*authorize the formation of a new Training Facilities Committee and that this new committee adopt the Maine Fire Chiefs' Task Force Report on Training Facilities (May 2006) as its foundation. The committee will consist of a maximum of 24 members and will make recommendations and report its findings to the Fire Commission*". Members discussed submitting a proposal to the Brunswick Local Redevelopment Authority. The proposal would be for the use of space and would not bind the Fire Commission but rather keep all options available. There is a time limit to submit the proposal so members suggested 5-7 members of the Training Facilities Committee tour the Brunswick base and identify any facilities or space that may be usable.

Residential Sprinklers/Truss Construction

Members discussed these two issues together since there was consensus that both subjects would first require significant education for the fire service, industry, legislators and the public. Members also agreed of the importance to identify and meet with the opposition. Other suggestions included a joint meeting of the two committees and initially joining resources to begin the education process. Members agreed it was important to present facts about costs and benefits to offset many of the misconceptions.

Regional Communications Centers

Fire Commission members were informed that the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) would soon be releasing a final report and recommendations on the number and locations for PSAPs in Maine. Following the report's release, there will be a two-week comment period. Members also learned that if the PSAP is not on the final PUC list, it will be required to provide its own funding by 2007. Members discussed jurisdiction of PSAPs being with PUC or Department of Public Safety. Fire Commission members also discussed the recent Task Force on Homeland Security meetings and findings and the importance of interoperability. Members did agree to wait for the final report before making a final decision.

Chair Cammack adjourned the meeting at 3:15pm.

<u>Meeting Schedule</u>			
<u>Monday, October 2nd</u>	MEETING	Florian Hall	1:00pm
<u>Monday, November 6th</u>	MEETING	Florian Hall	1:00pm
<u>Monday, December 4th</u>	MEETING	Florian Hall	1:00pm
<u>Monday, January 8th</u>	FIRE CAUCUS	State House	12Noon
<u>Monday, January 8th</u>	MEETING	State House	1:00pm

